



THE PLAIN DEALER

Bigger mess discovered in Superfund cleanup

Bigger mess discovered at Superfund site

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By JAMES LAWLESS
PLAIN DEALER REPORTER

ASHTABULA TOWNSHIP - Cleaning up the Superfund site at Fields Brook will take two months longer and will cost millions of dollars now that a vein of contaminated soil several hundred feet long has been discovered.

Terese VanDonsel, project manager for Environmental Protection Agency, said the project had to be stopped until a new design for the cleanup could be created. The site is near where Fields Brook crosses State Rd. just east of Ashtabula.

"We had expected pockets of this material, but when they started to dig in a clean area, we could smell it," VonDonsel said. "We tried to dig it out and found it was more extensive than we expected." She estimated 15,000 cubic yards of dirt will have to be removed.

Joseph Heimbuch, senior project manager for Demaximis, the Knoxville firm hired to do the cleanup, said workers discovered the vein of hazardous waste materials, considerably larger than originally expected, and had to stop the project.

All of that buried waste will have to be dug out, treated and then disposed of. Because it is hazardous, it will have to be handled carefully. About \$6 million has already been spent in removing tens of thousands cubic yards of hazardous waste from six locations away from the brook.

Companies that have agreed to pay for the \$6 million cleanup are Millennium Inorganic Chemicals, Detrex Corp., Acme Scrap Iron and Metal, Conrail and RMI Metals. This work was done to prevent even further contamination of the creek when the later work begins.

Wastes found include solvents, low-level radionuclides, PCBs, mining residuals and low-level arsenic.

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The total cleanup, which is supposed to be done next year, has wildly differing cost estimates. VanDonsel said original estimates were between \$30 million to \$40 million, but Himbuch said that had dropped to \$15 million. He said he could not accurately estimate how much more this stoppage will cost except to say "millions."

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